The State of New Hampshire

Department of Environmental Services

NHDES

Michael P. Nolin
Commissioner

January 19, 2006

The Honorable David P. Currier, Chairman
Resources, Recreation, and Development Committee
Room 305, LOB
Concord, NH 03301

RE: House Bill 1407, Relative to funding exotic aquatic weeds eradication and control

Dear Representative Currier:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 1407 which would repeal the sunset on funding for the Milfoil and Other Exotic Aquatic Plant Prevention and Research Grant Programs. DES supports this legislation.

The Milfoil and Other Exotic Plant Prevention and Research Grant Program was established in 2003 in response to a request for additional funding by lake residents, lake association members, and municipalities to conduct prevention related activities, and by research entities with facilities suited for scientific investigations.

Prevention grants have provided key funding to popular programs like Lake Host and Weed Watcher. Grants obtained from this program fund staffing at public access sites, increase educational materials in boater guides, and aid individual lake and watershed associations in setting up their own education and outreach strategies to combat the spread of exotic aquatic plants like milfoil. The Prevention Grant Program has been in place for only three years and has an exceptional record of more than 81 'saves' (a save is an incident of possible exotic plants being introduced into a waterbody). These saves have been documented by vigilant public access site monitors that inspect boats and trailers as they enter and leave waterbodies. These funds have also led to the creation of an expanded network of grass-roots education activities that helps New Hampshire check the spread of exotic aquatic plants from state boundaries to lake boundaries. The Milfoil and Other Exotic Aquatic Plant Grant Program has been credited for dramatically reducing the number of infested waterbodies each year.

Research grants have also been very useful in providing needed information in the war against milfoil and other exotic aquatic plants. The Lower Suncook Lake project, funded from Milfoil Research Grants, provided a key opportunity to establish partnerships between the local lake association, the University of New Hampshire, and the Department of Environmental Services. The goal of this partnership was to investigate the effectiveness of a 2, 4-D treatment to provide long term milfoil control, and to determine the fate and transport of 2, 4-D. Today, Lower Suncook Lake is apparently devoid of variable milfoil due to this important study. DES has accumulated valuable information concerning the effectiveness of integrated variable milfoil control options and the research project data shows that the herbicide did not infiltrate into area wells. Other research grants seek to streamline the logistics associated with mapping exotic plant infestations, as well as maximizing the efficiency of identifying the locations and areas of infestation.

The repeal of the sunset provision would allow for the continued funding of the Prevention and Research Grant Program. This program has a proven track record of successes in slowing the spread of exotic species, and in providing valuable data for understanding the control and biology of milfoil and other exotic aquatic plants in New Hampshire. This funding provides an excellent opportunity for state and private

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entities to increase collaboration on projects, and to bring national recognition to New Hampshire, which is known nationally for its proactive approach for exotic aquatic plant management.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment in support of this important legislation. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call Jody Connor at 271-3414 or me at 271-3449.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Walls, Ass't. Comm.

Michael P. Nolin
Commissioner

cc: Representative Dick Drisko
        Representative Richard Cooney
        Representative Donald Brueggemann
        Representative Peyton Hinkle
        Representative David Russell